

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 866

By Turner M

A RESOLUTION to commend Bill Purcell for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated their professional careers and personal excellence to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Bill Purcell is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, throughout Mr. Purcell's exemplary tenure as the fifth Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, he distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to his community; and

WHEREAS, Nashvillians first elected Bill Purcell as Mayor in 1999, and enthusiastically reelected him to a second term in 2003 with a record setting 84.8 percent of the vote; his constituents shared his desire for good schools in every neighborhood, safe neighborhoods in every part of the city, and a quality of life shared by all; and

WHEREAS, under Mayor Purcell's administration, school funding rose from \$397 million dollars to \$563 million dollars, which equates to an astounding 42 percent increase over seven years; and

WHEREAS, Bill Purcell also provided increased funding for public safety and pursued an aggressive strategy to put more officers on the streets, with more than a dozen police classes recruited since January of 2000; he opened a new police precinct in Hermitage, built a new precinct in North Nashville, and moved the Central Precinct to the heart of downtown Nashville; and

WHEREAS, his attention to Nashvillians' quality of life ranged from the arts to the parks and from the Symphony to the Opera; he received the Public Leadership in the Arts Award from

Americans for the Arts in 2005 for his work as the “keeper” of one of America’s greatest art forms, music; and

WHEREAS, during Mayor Purcell’s exemplary tenure, Nashville saw unprecedented economic expansion, and Music City’s proud citizens welcomed the corporate headquarters of Caremark, Louisiana Pacific, Asurion, Quanta, and Nissan; and

WHEREAS, under Bill Purcell’s astute leadership, downtown Nashville experienced a residential renaissance that will increase the number of housing units in the center of the city from 900 units to 4,500 units by 2010; he continued development efforts to bring more people and businesses to Nashville’s downtown and to the nearby Gulch and Rolling Mill Hill areas through infrastructure improvements; and

WHEREAS, as Mayor, Mr. Purcell focused on improving the city’s infrastructure and amenities; the Shelby Street Bridge, a renovated walking bridge linking the downtown and East Nashville, has become an icon for the city; and

WHEREAS, Bill Purcell’s first act as Mayor was the creation of the “Mayor’s Office of Neighborhoods”; throughout his administration, he worked assiduously to help neighborhoods work with the government to improve services; and

WHEREAS, he also created an “Office of Affordable Housing” to spur the development of more than 26,000 affordable housing units since 1999; he focused on increasing the availability of downtown residential units and preserving housing stock in the city’s historic neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, as a testament to his fine leadership abilities, Bill Purcell earned *GOVERNING Magazine*’s Public Official of the Year honor in 2006 as a Mayor “who simultaneously improved his city’s quality of life and spurred business expansion with an ambitious agenda that included strengthened public schools and revitalized neighborhoods” ; and

WHEREAS, an attorney by profession, Mr. Purcell received his law degree from Vanderbilt University and is the recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Vanderbilt Law School; and

WHEREAS, prior to being elected Mayor, he served as director of the Child and Family Policy Center at the Vanderbilt Institute of Public Policy Studies; and

WHEREAS, he rendered sterling service for five terms in the Tennessee House of Representatives beginning in 1986; a former House Majority Leader and Chair of the Select Committee on Children and Youth, Mr. Purcell's work in the legislature positioned him in the forefront of education, health care, workers compensation, and criminal sentencing reforms; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Harvard University's Institute of Politics named Mr. Purcell a Resident Fellow for the fall term, during which term he has used his professional expertise to lead weekly seminars on the topic of 21st Century American Cities; and

WHEREAS, upon the completion of his term at Harvard, Mr. Purcell returned to Nashville to become Interim Dean of the College of Public Service and Urban Affairs, a new program being launched at Tennessee State University; he has also agreed to be the Scholar-in-Residence at Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School for the Spring of 2008 term; and

WHEREAS, Bill Purcell's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to his reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and his uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Mr. Purcell is fortunate to share both love and companionship with his wife, Debbie Miller, and daughter, Jesse, a graduate of Hume-Fogg, who is attending college; and

WHEREAS, Bill Purcell is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Bill Purcell for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee as Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County and salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.